



# Partner Strategic Action Plan

*New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park 2007-2012*



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## Acknowledgements

DPRA is a leading consulting practice in the fields of strategic planning, stakeholder consultation, facilitation, and change management. As leaders in our respective fields, members of our team have assisted dozens of organizations to effect change over the past 30 years. We have a long history of successfully working with organizations, municipalities, and corporations to develop strategic and organizational plans, benchmark and survey trends, and assisting with implementation programs. Our experience working with the National Park Service and its partners in New Bedford was both dynamic and rewarding.

The Partner Strategic Action Plan would not have been successfully completed without the extraordinary efforts, professional attitude, and concentrated energy of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park partners and stakeholders throughout the three-month planning process.

We would like to thank the partners who participated in the interviews, attended the two-day strategy session, and took the opportunity to provide meaningful direction, comments, and suggestions.

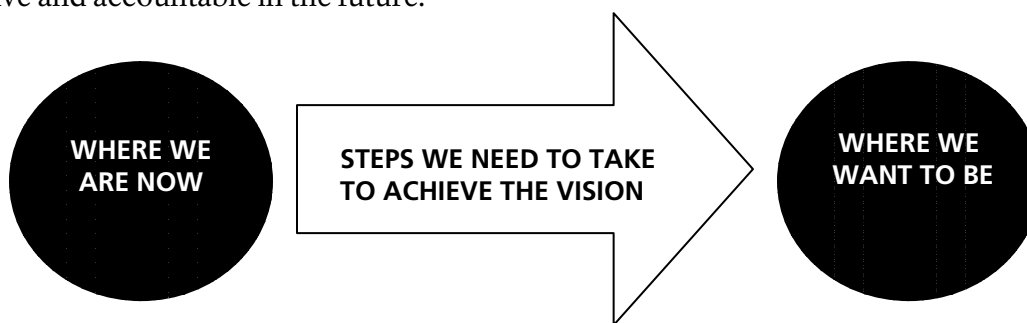
We would also like to thank the staff at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park who provided their time, support, advice, and direction throughout the development of this Partner Strategic Action Plan.

## Preface

Strategic planning is a process by which members of an organization and interested stakeholders envision their future and develop the necessary procedures and operating principles to achieve their desired future.

A strategic action plan is one of the most important documents that an organization can have. It establishes the vision of what the organization is trying to achieve and the steps necessary to achieve that vision.

A strategic action plan reflects the needs and expectations of stakeholders as identified through various engagement and consultation activities. Stakeholders provide opinions based on their experiences working within the organization and outline what would make the organization more productive and accountable in the future.



Equipped with the knowledge of what stakeholders would like New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (NBWNHP) to be, National Park Service (NPS) staff and partner organizations can then identify a sequence of actions that need to be undertaken to successfully achieve the vision by meeting goals and objectives.

A strategic action plan clearly acknowledges what an organization can do by itself and what must be done in cooperation with others. Equally important, a strategic action plan provides a framework by which stakeholders can make informed decisions and achieve success.

The Partner Strategic Action Plan for NBWNHP sets the course and outlines strategies of how to achieve the vision of the park's development over the next five years. Because circumstances may change over time and new opportunities may arise, the Partner Strategic Action Plan must remain flexible. Therefore, the actions developed to achieve the vision will be reviewed, refined, and modified annually as required.

## Section 1: Introduction

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (NBWNHP) represents a new model in the National Park Service (NPS): preservation and education are achieved, not through federal ownership, but through partnerships.

Core NPS partners identified in the park's General Management Plan (GMP) include:

- City of New Bedford;
- New Bedford Historical Society;
- Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE);
- New Bedford Whaling Museum;
- Schooner *Ernestina*;
- Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum;
- New Bedford Port Society;
- Iñupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska; and
- Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head

Together, park partners preserve New Bedford's historic landscapes, structures, and collections and promote research and educational programming associated with the history of whaling. The park interprets the global reach of New Bedford's whaling trades through partnerships in regions visited by the city's whaling fleet. Locally, the park functions as a source of community identity and pride and fosters a climate in which community initiatives and collaborations are encouraged.

To meet the needs of visitors, partners, staff, and management, the park initiated a process to develop a five-year strategic action plan for fiscal years 2007-2011. Park staff and partners developed the Partner Strategic Action Plan to create and prioritize specific objectives and actions that are tied to the goals established in the park's GMP.

The process by which the vision and direction of the NBWNHP Partner Strategic Action Plan was prepared and the role of NPS staff and partners in developing the plan is outlined in this document.

The Partner Strategic Action Plan consists of the following components:

Section 2: About the Park

Section 3: About the Partner Strategic Action Plan

- Key outcomes;
- How the plan was developed; and
- Research findings

#### Section 4: The Partner Strategic Action Plan

- Mission;
- Vision;
- Operating Principles;
- Goals;
- Objectives

#### Section 5: Actions

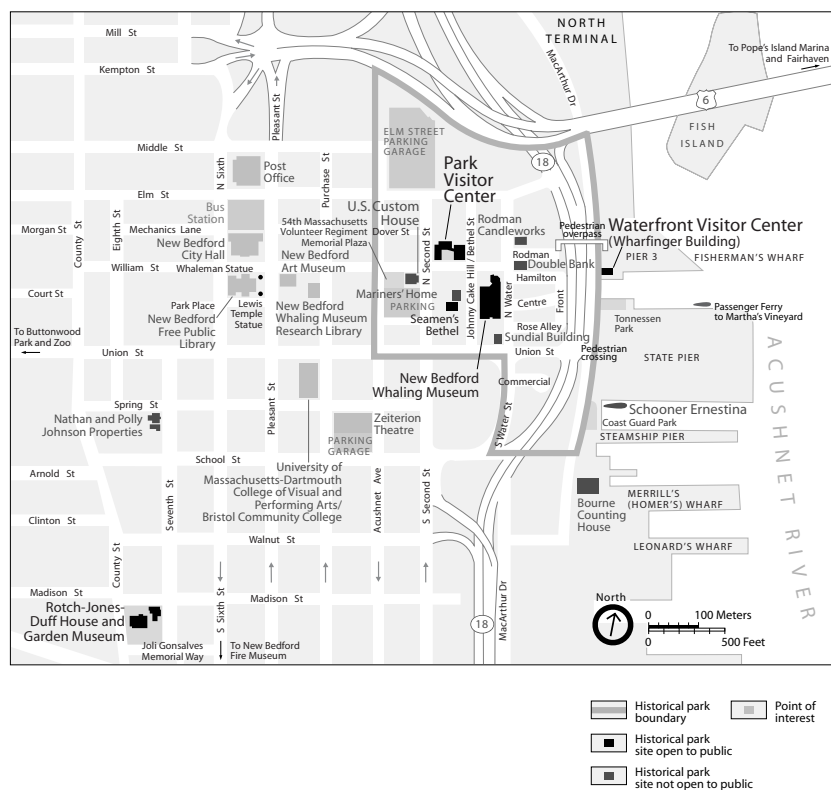
Park staff and partners will implement the Partner Strategic Action Plan through an annual priority-setting process, the development of annual operational work plans and budgets, and follow-up assessments and evaluations.

## Section 2: About the Park

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (NBWNHP), created through the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-533, Sec. 511), is one of over 390 units in the National Park system. Congress established NBWNHP to commemorate the American whaling industry and its contribution to our nation's history. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, New Bedford was the whaling capital of the world. Today, that history is reflected in the city's historical architecture and the outstanding museum collections and archival materials preserved by the park's partner institutions.

The park encompasses 34 acres spread over 13 city blocks, including the New Bedford Historic District, a National Historic Landmark District. The schooner *Ernestina*, a national historic landmark berthed at State Pier on the waterfront, is also considered, by virtue of the enabling legislation, to be within the park.

The park boundary encompasses more than 70 properties, most of which are historic structures in private ownership. Some are owned and managed by other government agencies, such as the city-owned Elm Street Garage and the Custom House, federally owned and managed by the General Services Administration. The *Ernestina*, owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is under the management of the Schooner *Ernestina* Commission in the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation.





The National Park Service is also authorized to assist in interpreting and preserving a number of sites integral to the park but outside its boundary. State Pier and Waterfront Park are owned and maintained by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The city's Office of Marketing and Tourism manages the Wharfinger Building as a waterfront visitor center. The Bourne Counting House is a privately owned structure. The Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum is owned by a nonprofit organization of the same name.

In addition to the park partners in New Bedford, the park is legislatively affiliated with the Iñupiat Heritage Center (IHC) in Barrow, Alaska. Congress established this relationship to ensure that the contributions of Alaskan natives to the history of whaling in the United States be recognized. The Iñupiat Heritage Center serves the people of the North Slope Borough as a dynamic repository and conveyor of traditional Iñupiaq cultural knowledge, values, and skills by collecting, recording, preserving, documenting, displaying, and interpreting artifacts and other associated materials relating to the history, culture, and traditions of the Iñupiat people. The park, its local partners, and the IHC, work together to connect the stories of Alaskan native and Yankee whaling.

The park, through collaboration with cultural organizations, offers visitors a wide range of experiences including (but not limited to):

- NPS visitor center provides orientation to park sites and attractions, distribution of maps and brochures, exhibits, and free volunteer and ranger-led tours (seasonal);
- New Bedford Whaling Museum offers exhibits, programs, and lecture series on the economic, social, and environmental history of whaling;
- Rotch-Jones-Duff House & Garden Museum chronicles 150 years of economic, social, and domestic life in New Bedford through permanent and changing exhibits, lecture series, programs, and events;
- Waterfront Visitor Center (Wharfinger Building) provides orientation to New Bedford's working waterfront;
- Schooner *Ernestina* offers educational programs and seminars tailored to meet the specific needs of schools, colleges, and other educational and cultural organizations;
- Nathan and Polly Johnson House is a site on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and a National Historic Landmark.



## Section 3: About the Partner Strategic Action Plan

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) requires that federal agencies develop a strategic plan, annual performance plan, and annual performance report. Although the park continues to meet these specific agency requirements, National Park Service (NPS) staff and partners recognized that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park's (NBWNHP) distinctive model of partnership requires a unique plan and management approach. In anticipation of the park's 10-year anniversary on November 12, 2006, park staff and partners began an open dialogue in preparation for the development of a new approach to the park's growth: a Partner Strategic Action Plan.

The foundation of the Partner Strategic Action Plan is the park's General Management Plan (GMP). The GMP was approved in 2001 by Northeast Regional Director Marie Rust and is the park's guiding management document for 15-20 years. The GMP is the culmination of a three-year planning process that incorporated multiple community perspectives and broader concerns through consensus. Using the park's enabling legislation as a framework, many stakeholders representing a diverse constituency worked together with the NPS to produce a GMP that mirrored their interests and needs.

The Partner Strategic Action Plan builds upon the park's mission statement, derived from the legislation that established the park, and includes a vision statement developed by park staff and partners, operating principles that suggest how the partners will work together to achieve the vision, goals from the GMP with new objectives, and actions to implement the plan and achieve the vision. Timeframes and responsible authorities have also been identified for each action to assist with the implementation during the park's fiscal years 2007 – 2011.

*Throughout this Partner Strategic Action Plan any reference to the “park” includes both the National Park Service and its partner organizations.*

### Key Outcomes

The following key outcomes are addressed in the Partner Strategic Action Plan:

- Incorporation of the goals as presented in the park's GMP (2001) and the strategies necessary to achieve the goals.
- Consideration and integration of input from park partners and NPS staff.
- Identification of additional partnerships with other organizations and interests. In this regard, the park's strategic action plan will differ from a corporate plan. As the plan is implemented, different partners may take on greater responsibility and participate in fulfilling the park's mission. The plan focuses broadly on the park's responsibilities and recognizes that many of the park's goals will only be realized if partners and their interests are involved. The plan identifies collaborative actions that can be undertaken by the park and partners in support of park-wide objectives.

- Production of realistic and achievable objectives and actions that guide the park's future decision-making. The actions identified assist the NPS and partners in establishing work plans, are collaborative undertakings, and are scheduled to be completed within the 5-year timeframe of the plan.

## How the Plan was Developed

In 2006, NBWNHP staff and partners initiated the Partner Strategic Action Planning process. To begin, the park superintendent facilitated detailed, constructive meetings of the park's Executive Committee comprised of directors of the park's core partner institutions as defined in the GMP. The Executive Committee and NPS staff conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. The exercise assisted in gathering information from stakeholders on the park's and partners' operating contexts, their existing strengths and weaknesses, and potential challenges and opportunities the park will likely face over the next five years. In addition, NPS staff examined the park's GMP recommendations, inventoried the recommendations, and identified those that had been completed and that were still pending. The SWOT results and GMP recommendations would form the basis for beginning the planning process.

Given the existing significant workloads and limited resources of stakeholders, NPS contracted DPRA Inc. to assist the partnership with the completion of its strategic action plan. The NPS staff determined that the Partner Strategic Action Plan would be created with input from various stakeholders including NPS staff and park partners.

To supplement the initial SWOT exercise, DPRA conducted interviews with NPS staff and partners to clarify the operating context of the park and the key strategic issues facing the organization (see Appendix A – List of Interviewees) as well as to review key documents and reference materials. A list of reference materials is provided in Appendix E.

Upon completion of the interviews, DPRA developed a briefing package which included a summary of the interviews (Appendix B), the results of the SWOT, and an agenda (Appendix D) and distributed it to NPS staff and the park's Executive Committee in preparation for a two-day strategy session.

During the two-day session DPRA worked with participants (Appendix C) to:

- present, review, and confirm key issues identified through interviews with stakeholders. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide additional issues;
- present, review, identify, and confirm key trends (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) through research and previous initiatives undertaken by the park;
- undertake a visioning exercise to establish a vision for NBWNHP;
- establish objectives that support each of the goals as identified in the park's GMP;
- develop actions as a way of identifying what needs to be done to support the vision statement, goals and objectives; and
- identify next steps.

A key outcome from the first strategy session was an expressed desire for NBWNHP to be “an exemplary national model of partnership and community collaboration.” Therefore, a second strategy session (half-day in duration) was held to discuss the model on which the Partner Strategic Action Plan would be based. This half-day session resulted in the development of partnership operating principles that will guide NPS staff and partners in the implementation of the plan.

In preparation for the second session, participants were asked to complete a partnership survey based on work completed by the *Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change* at Simmons College in Boston. The questions focused on partnerships and their role in supporting organizational change. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the partners’ views on the current state of the park’s partnership and collaborative relationships.

The aggregated results were presented to the participants as a means of stimulating open dialogue to define the operating principles for how the partnership would govern itself as it collaboratively implemented the strategic action plan moving forward.

## Research Findings

The SWOT analysis and the subsequent stakeholder interviews conducted in advance of the two-day strategy session identified a number of challenges and opportunities. A brief summary of the broad key findings are presented below:

### *Volunteers*

Volunteers have demonstrated dedication to the organizations through their endless participation in park and partner operations, outreach programs, and initiatives. However, there are several organizations – with limited capacity – that currently draw on a finite number of volunteers. Some interviewees noted a limited institutional management of volunteers and lack of communication between various partner volunteer groups, which prohibits collaboration and resource sharing efficiencies between the partner institutions. Enhanced coordination and communication between the partners could promote the sharing of volunteers. Similarly, coordination between the partner organizations could facilitate volunteer cross-training and recruitment opportunities. These types of actions would ease the burden on the finite pool of volunteer assistance.

### *Staff Expertise and Development*

Many partners and NPS staff indicated there are limited staff resources and numerous commitments that keep them occupied with day-to-day operations of the park. Therefore, many staff do not have the time and ability to continually upgrade their skill sets necessary to build the capacity required for their professional positions. This limits their ability to create improvements in educational and interpretive programming, outreach, and preservation focused on improving the sustainability of the park.

NBWNHP should work towards sharing resources, including trained volunteers, to reduce day-to-day pressures on staff and encourage interaction between partners creating sustainable projects and work environments. Many of the staff and partners could also share their knowledge

and experience through cross-training opportunities (e.g. security, health and safety, customer service, interpretation, etc), creating more collaborative projects and programming opportunities. Staff should also capitalize on strengths of each organization and jointly work towards fundraising opportunities.

### ***Technology and Marketing***

Suggestions were put forward to increase visitation through marketing and advertising, which could be done by working with the City of New Bedford to develop a marketing and tourism strategy for the area. Another opportunity to attract visitors to and help them navigate through the park is the development and installation of improved signage. Technology suggestions included the development and regular maintenance of an interactive on-line calendar and increased email correspondence to interested partners and stakeholders. It is also important to improve virtual pathways to create clear and effective on-line navigation for stakeholders and visitors.

### ***Infrastructure***

The park encompasses 34 acres spread over 13 city blocks and includes more than 70 historic structures. The ease and safety of pedestrian movement is challenged by the presence of major roadways throughout the park. Some mentioned the need for a better linkage between the park and the waterfront. Suggestions included improving signage on walkways. The planned Route 18 project will also improve vehicular traffic movement.

### ***Collections***

The park must continue to carry out their protection and preservation mandate, including inventorying, cataloguing, and archiving of artifacts and documents associated with the whaling industry. This will require collections management initiatives, including additional training and funding.

### ***Education, Outreach and Programming***

The outcomes from the SWOT and interviews identified that visitors to New Bedford as well as local citizens of the community were not fully aware of the park and all it has to offer. Therefore, it is important to continue to build awareness of the park and gain local support by reaching out to community representatives and local organizations.

The Corson Building was viewed as important as it pertained to education, outreach, programming, and the long-term sustainability of the park. The completion of the building will increase opportunities for educational programming (via centralization of some park partner programs) and special events. Other important issues with respect to the Corson Building include securing funding, completing construction within budget and on-time, and identifying partners to assist in programming the space.

Some NPS staff and partners expressed the importance of additional outreach to the community including telling a more comprehensive story of whaling and offering additional after-school and youth programs.

### ***Funding***

As with many organizations, the challenge of obtaining the level of funding required to maintain and expand park activities was a concern expressed by many NPS staff and partners. The park should explore joint funding opportunities (e.g. grants, federal funding, etc) while maintaining the current delivery of park services and programs in a flexible and cost-effective manner.

### ***Partnerships***

The park prides itself on the strong collaborations with partner organizations and wants to be recognized as an exemplary partnership model. The opportunity exists to build additional partnerships with institutions like the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Bristol Community College, and the New Bedford Public Schools while strengthening current partnerships. Supportive partnerships should encourage collaboration and communication and develop strategic actions to move forward together to achieve the park's goals more effectively and efficiently.

## Section 4: The Partner Strategic Action Plan

The Partner Strategic Action Plan has six key components:

- 1) **Mission** – a synthesis of the park’s legislatively mandated purpose and primary significance.
- 2) **Vision** – a description of the park’s desired future state.
- 3) **Operating Principles** – the fundamental values of how the partnership will govern itself as it collaboratively implements the strategic action plan.
- 4) **Goals** – qualitative statements that highlight the key issues raised during the strategic planning process and add depth to the vision statement.
- 5) **Objectives** – measurable steps that, taken together, lead to meeting goals.
- 6) **Actions** – specific tasks with timeframes and assigned responsibilities that must be undertaken in order to achieve the objectives.

The Partner Strategic Action Plan is based on the park’s mission statement as identified in the park’s General Management Plan (GMP). During the two-day strategy session, the partners created a vision that described the desired future. In order to achieve the park’s mission and vision, operating principles were defined on how the partnership was to govern itself when working collaboratively. The partners revisited the park’s goals, also listed in the park’s GMP, and determined that they continue to be relevant to the park’s future operations and development. These goals form the foundation on which the park is based, and which, in turn, will ensure its continued positive development. The vision and goals, along with information obtained from the background research, the GMP, interviews, and the SWOT analysis were then used to develop a number of objectives. Objectives are more specific steps that aim to achieve the goals. For each objective, the partners identified a number of actions to assist the partnership with the implementation of the plan. Each action item represents an activity that must be carried out by two or more partners within a particular timeframe.



## Mission

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (NBWNHP) preserves for the benefit and inspiration of the people of the United States certain districts, structures, and relics associated with the history of whaling and related social and economic themes in America. The park's enabling legislation states that the purpose of NBWNHP is to "help preserve, protect and interpret the resources" within the national historical park "including architecture, setting, and associated archival and museum collections."

NBWNHP commemorates the city of New Bedford's heritage as the world's preeminent whaling port during the 19th century. It is the only NPS unit that focuses on the whaling industry's historic role in American and world culture. An extensive assemblage of cultural resources including landscapes, historic buildings, museum collections, and archives preserve this history and collectively recount the stories of a remarkable era. Whaling, a leading 19th century enterprise, contributed to America's economic and political vitality, both domestically and abroad. A complex business network of maritime industries operated by whaling merchants supported the industry.

The mission statement, from the park's 2001 GMP is a synthesis of the park's mandated purpose and primary significance:

*New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park helps to preserve, protect, and interpret certain districts, structures, and artifacts that are associated with the history of whaling and related social, economic, and environmental themes for the benefit and inspiration of this and future generations. These efforts will be undertaken in partnership with the City of New Bedford, local and regional institutions, and the Iñupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska.*

## Vision

A vision is a general statement that is timeless, inspirational, and future-focused. The vision is a description of what an organization wants to achieve. A vision statement differs from the park's mission statement which, as noted above, is a synthesis of its mandated purpose and primary significance.

The vision was developed by park staff and partners during the two-day strategy session. Park partners want New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park to be:

*A compelling destination that preserves and interprets the American whaling industry and its global influence through an exemplary national model of partnership and community collaboration.*

How this vision is realized is addressed and discussed in the following sections: operating principles, goals, objectives, and actions.



## Operating Principles

Nine operating principles that will govern the way NPS staff and partners conduct their activities and relationships on collaborative initiatives were developed during the two-day strategy sessions. Park partners will:

1. Share leadership, responsibility, credit, and success;
2. Engage in mutually beneficial activities that enhance the partnership in support of the vision;
3. Create opportunities for partner and community collaboration;
4. Communicate openly and effectively;
5. Treat each other with dignity and respect;
6. Work in an atmosphere of trust, transparency, and accountability;
7. Commit to excellence and high standards;
8. Collaborate in a flexible, dependable, and empathetic manner; and
9. Embrace cultural diversity.

## Goals

The goals are based on the park's mission and significance statement presented in the park's GMP. They serve as broad guiding principles for park programs and for setting priorities. They are a qualitative broad description of what is critical to achieving the vision.

The mission goals for NBWNHP are as follows:

- Goal 1:** Through partnerships with local, regional, and national institutions, organizations, and communities, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park supports the preservation of the historic landscapes, structures, and museum and archival collections in New Bedford that are associated with the history of whaling.
- Goal 2:** The park contributes to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of historic resources related to the social, economic, and environmental history of whaling and their associated themes, and fosters the stewardship of these resources through a network of private and public partners.
- Goal 3:** New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park collaborates with a wide range of institutions within the city of New Bedford and beyond to promote the delivery of high-quality, comprehensive, interpretive, cultural, and educational programming to the general public.
- Goal 4:** At New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park visitors understand the global dimensions of the city's whaling industry and maritime trades (past, present, and future), including their social, economic, and environmental history, the diversity of cultures associated with the industry, and its relationship to arctic exploration and Native Alaskan cultures.
- Goal 5:** Visitor pathways to destinations within the city are safe and easy to navigate. Virtual pathways guide visitors to well-designed and -developed destinations on the Internet that are easy to find and use.
- Goal 6:** The park and its partners achieve these goals in a flexible, cost-effective, and responsive manner.
- Goal 7:** The National Park Service recognizes that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is a source of community identity and pride and that positive, local participation in support of the park will yield success. NBWNHP fosters a climate in which community initiatives and collaborations are encouraged.

## Objectives

Objectives state what specifically needs to be accomplished in order to achieve a goal. An objective represents an initiative towards which effort is directed. Objectives, measurable and time bound, are specific steps towards achieving goals.

The Partner Strategic Action Plan objectives for the coming five fiscal years have been developed by strategy session participants in response to the challenges and opportunities identified through the planning process. The seven goals and associated objectives, supported by a brief explanation/rationale, are as follows:

### Goal 1: Supporting Preservation

**Through partnerships with local, regional, and national institutions, organizations, and communities, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park supports the preservation of the historic landscapes, structures, and museum and archival collections in New Bedford that are associated with the history of whaling.**

This goal addresses all objectives that relate to the condition of historic landscapes, structures, and museum and archival collections. It includes the importance of maintaining, protecting, preserving landscapes within the park boundaries and providing the required support and resources for historic and cultural preservation initiatives.

This goal also includes the importance of researching and planning for future preservation projects to ensure that, through partnerships, the park continues to support the preservation of structures within the park boundaries for future generations.

**Three objectives support the goal of preserving the historical landscapes, structures and museum and archival collections:**

**Objective 1A:** Maintain, protect, preserve, develop, and enhance the park's cultural landscapes and other structures within the park boundaries in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

**Objective 1B:** Provide required technical support and resources for preservation of museum and archival collections.

**Objective 1C:** Conduct research and planning for preservation and development projects.

### Goal 2: Accumulation of Knowledge and Fostering Stewardship

**The park contributes to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of historic resources related to the social, economic, and environmental history of whaling and their associated themes, and fosters the stewardship of these resources through a network of private and public partners.**

NBWNHP will continue to contribute to the accumulation of knowledge and build a further understanding and appreciation of historic resources related to the social, economic, and environmental history of whaling. This will include identifying gaps in the historical record and assisting current partners with research-based initiatives. The park will also improve technology to better share archival collections with the public.

**Two objectives support the goal of accumulating knowledge and fostering stewardship:**

**Objective 2A:** Assist current partners with initiatives to accumulate knowledge through scholarly research and increase awareness of historic resources related to whaling.

**Objective 2B:** Develop or improve technology to share current research archives with the public through a network of private and public partners.

### **Goal 3: Collaboration to Promote Delivery of Educational Programming**

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park collaborates with a wide range of institutions within the city of New Bedford and beyond to promote the delivery of high-quality, comprehensive, interpretive, cultural, and educational programming to the general public.

The park prides itself on its strong partnerships and will continue to collaborate with a wide range of local and regional institutions and at the Iñupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska. Through collaborations, the park will continue to deliver, evaluate, and improve curriculum-based educational programs for students and educators as well as formal and informal interpretative programming for learners of all ages.

The park will also offer and improve the use of media within the park to interpret the history of whaling and related themes through high-quality, comprehensive, interpretive, cultural, and educational publications, audio visual programs, exhibits, and technology.

**Three objectives support the goal of collaboration to promote delivery of educational programming:**

**Objective 3A:** Work with partners to develop, provide, deliver, evaluate, and improve curriculum-based educational programs for students, educators, and lifelong learners.

**Objective 3B:** Provide formal and informal interpretive programming to engage people and help them make enduring connections to New Bedford's whaling and maritime history.

**Objective 3C:** Offer and improve use of interpretive media and implement the use of new technologies within the park to interpret the history of the American whaling industry, related themes, and to build awareness of park initiatives.

## **Goal 4: Global Dimensions of the City's Whaling Industry**

**At New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park visitors understand the global dimensions of the city's whaling industry and maritime trades (past, present, and future), including their social, economic, and environmental history, the diversity of cultures associated with the industry, and its relationship to arctic exploration and Native Alaskan cultures.**

Park staff and partners expressed the importance of providing opportunities for local residents and visitors to understand and appreciate the significance and contributions of the American whaling industry to our shared history. The park's interpretive themes reveal the complexity and breadth of the American whaling story and pose a challenge to the NPS and its partners to communicate the "global dimensions" of the industry to visitors. To accomplish this, the park will present a balanced, in-depth and inclusive interpretation of the whaling industry and maritime trades.

**Three objectives support the goal of providing opportunities for visitors to understand the global dimension of the city's whaling industry and maritime trades:**

**Objective 4A:** Provide opportunities throughout the park for visitors to understand the commercial practice, social make-up, and environmental history of the city's whaling industry, commercial fishing industry, and maritime trades.

**Objective 4B:** Interpret the diversity of cultures associated with the city's whaling industry and maritime trades, and how these cultures continue to exist and influence New Bedford today.

**Objective 4C:** Interpret the relationship of the whaling industry to arctic exploration and Native Alaskan cultures and their direct connection to New Bedford.

## **Goal 5: Visitor Pathways**

**Visitor pathways to destinations within the city are safe and easy to navigate. Virtual pathways guide visitors to well-designed and -developed destinations on the Internet that are easy to find and use.**

The park encompasses 34 acres spread over 13 city blocks. The narrow streets and small city blocks of 19<sup>th</sup> century New Bedford have remained unchanged in much of the park, making vehicular access somewhat challenging for new visitors. This historic street grid is juxtaposed to the strong impact that Route 18, a limited access highway, has on the landscape in the area of the park adjacent to the working waterfront. To ensure a safe and comprehensive voyage through the park, it is important to ensure visitor pathways are safe and easy to navigate for both pedestrians and vehicles. The park will work to improve all visitor pathways to encourage ease of movement and safety within its boundaries, as well as to partner sites that are located outside of the park's legislated boundary.

The re-design of Route 18 is seen by the park as the most significant infrastructure project that will take place within park boundaries for the foreseeable future. This \$15 million project will greatly improve access from the park to the working waterfront for pedestrians, while greatly enhancing the physical appearance of the roadway with appropriate lighting, paving and landscaping. Improved access points at newly created intersections will also address vehicular safety issues.

Staff and partners have identified the vehicular traffic flow through the park and limited parking as current challenges. Improving parking options will enhance the visitor experience and may assist in the marketing efforts to bring more visitors to the area.

The park website recently was updated and expanded as part of a national effort to provide a consistent design and layout for all NPS sites. Specific improvements include enhanced content sections, improved tools for planning a visit to the park, and better access to partner sites

**Three objectives support the goal of visitor pathways:**

**Objective 5A:** Improve walkways and signage to encourage ease of pedestrian movement and safety throughout the park.

**Objective 5B:** Improve vehicular movement and signage through the park and enhance and increase all parking options.

**Objective 5C:** Improve park technology to provide a more user-friendly and cohesive virtual experience for online visitors.

**Goal 6: Flexibility and Cost effectiveness**

**The park and its partners achieve these goals in a flexible, cost-effective, and responsive manner.**

The information gathered during the strategic planning process clearly indicates that staff and partners are stretched in completing their duties and can expect to maintain (or potentially increase) workloads over the next five years. These challenges result in a continued emphasis on administrative efficiency in a flexible and cost-effective manner.

It is important for the park to continue the commitment of fiscal responsibility and accountability for park management activities. NPS and partner staff will need to continue to work together to accomplish goals in a flexible, cost-effective, and responsive manner.

**Two objectives support the goal of flexibility and cost effectiveness:**

**Objective 6A:** Continue the commitment of accountability and fiscal responsibility for park management activities.

**Objective 6b:** Develop and implement protocols for resource sharing that will allow park partners to accomplish goals in a flexible, cost-effective, and responsive manner.

## **Goal 7: Local Participation and Pride**

**The National Park Service recognizes that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is a source of community identity and pride and that positive, local participation in support of the park will yield success. New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park fosters a climate in which community initiatives and collaborations are encouraged.**

New Bedford is seen by its residents as a diverse and culturally rich community with a proud past, present, and future. The city prides itself on its working waterfront, vibrant neighborhoods, and storied past. The City of New Bedford website indicates that “while it is a city of approximately 100,000 people, New Bedford maintains a close-knit community feel.”

**Two Objectives support the goal of local participation and pride:**

**Objective 7A:** Continue to plan, implement, and support community outreach activities that attract new audiences to the park.

**Objective 7B:** Engage the local community in meaningful dialogue that results in collaborative partnership projects in support of park themes.



## Section 5: Actions

The following section outlines the specific National Park Service (NPS) or collaborative actions identified by participants during the two-day strategy session.

Following are key points considered while developing the actions. All actions must be:

- Linked directly linked to an objective which, in turn, supports the goals and overall vision for the park;
- relevant, useful, and achievable;
- assigned to the NPS or the NPS and one or more organizations to initiate the implementation of the action; and
- assigned an appropriate timeframe to accomplish the action.

These actions are in response to the issues and challenges the Partner Strategic Action Plan is intended to address. The actions, along with more detailed information on the resources required for their implementation, will be incorporated into each organization's Annual Operating Plan as appropriate.

The actions are summarized in tabular format and organized by goals and objectives. Each table identifies the estimated timeframe for completing the actions as well as the partner or partners who are responsible for completing the task.

### Timeframe

Timeframe refers to the period in which the action will be completed. In some cases, an action may be targeted to be completed in a particular year. Other actions may need to be completed on an annual or on an ongoing basis during the span of the five-year plan.

### Responsibility

The recommended organization/agency to lead the initiation of the action(s) as well as other partners who should contribute are listed in the following tables. In some cases the action will require contribution from all partners.

#### LEGEND

ERN – Schooner *Ernestina*  
NBWM – New Bedford Whaling Museum  
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All – All partners  
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**Goal 1:** Through partnerships with local, regional, and national institutions, organizations, and communities, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park supports the preservation of the historic landscapes, structures, and museum and archival collections in New Bedford that are associated with the history of whaling.

**Objective 1A:** Maintain, protect, preserve, develop and enhance the park's cultural landscapes and other structures within the park boundaries in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Provide technical support to New Bedford Historical Commission and property owners.	Ongoing	NPS	City, WHALE
Maintain historic fabric of streets and sidewalks.	Ongoing	NPS	City
Establish Park Historic Preservation Committee.	2007	NPS	WHALE, City
Complete rehabilitation of Corson Building.	2007-08	NPS	City
Complete Phase II Lamp heads.	2007	City	NPS
Restore RJD Fence.	2007- 09	RJD	NPS
Restore interior of Bourne Building.	2008	NBWM	NPS
Provide technical assistance to rehabilitate <i>Ernestina</i> to sailing condition.	2007-08	NPS	ERN
Rehabilitate interior of Johnson House.	2008-09	NBHS	NPS
Restore exterior elements of Sundial Building.	2009	NBWM	NPS
Facilitate completion of NPS HABS-HAER measured drawings of Schooner <i>Ernestina</i> .	2010	ERN	NPS

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**Goal 1:** Through partnerships with local, regional, and national institutions, organizations, and communities, New Bedford Whaling NHP supports the preservation of the historic landscapes, structures, and museum and archival collections in New Bedford that are associated with the history of whaling.

**Objective 1B:** Provide required technical support and resources for preservation of museum and archival collections.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Establish Park Collections Committee and develop strategy for collections management assistance for park partners.	2007	NPS	All
House <i>Ernestina</i> collection.	2007	NPS	ERN
Restore Carpenter painting.	2008-2009	RJD	NBWM/NPS

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**Goal 1:** Through partnerships with local, regional, and national institutions, organizations, and communities, New Bedford Whaling NHP supports the preservation of the historic landscapes, structures, and museum and archival collections in New Bedford that are associated with the history of whaling.

**Objective 1C:** Conduct research and planning for preservation and development projects.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Assist in the development of the city's Master Planning efforts as they affect the park.	2007-08	NPS	All
Evaluate feasibility Baker-Robinson Whale Oil Refinery legislation.	2007	NPS	City
Seek Nathan and Polly Johnson House Legislative Change.	2007	NPS	NBHS
Complete research on Form B Project.	2007	NPS	City
Conduct Archaeological Overview and Inventory.	2008	NPS	All
Carry-out electron-magnetic scan of RJD grounds.	2008	RJD	
Prepare Historic Structure Documentation for NBWNHP.	2008-10	NPS	All
Seek and carry-out training opportunities/workshops on technical historic preservation including restoration and maintenance techniques.	2008 - annually	NPS	WHALE, City
Complete Historic Structures Report for Seaman's Bethel.	2009	NPS	NBPS
Prepare park-wide National Register Documentation.	2010	NPS	
Complete RJD Cultural Landscape Report (Phase I).	2010	RJD	NPS
Complete RJD Cultural Landscape Report (Phase II).	2011	RJD	NPS

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**Goal 2:** The park contributes to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of historic resources related to the social, economic, and environmental history of whaling and their associated themes, and fosters the stewardship of these resources through a network of private and public partners.

**Objective 2A:** Assist current partners with initiatives to accumulate knowledge through scholarly research and increase awareness of historic resources related to whaling.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Complete an Ethnohistorical/Ethnographic Study on New Bedford whaling industry.	2010	NPS	All partners and community at large
Prepare RJD Historic Furnishings Plan.	2007	NPS	RJD
Develop park research committee to identify and prioritize research needs related to historic resources related to or associated with the park.	2007	NPS	All
Develop plan to partner with academic institutions to fulfill park's research needs.	2008	NPS	All
Develop symposium: Needlework and the Sea.	2008	NBWM	All
Complete NBWNHP Historic Resource Study.	2009	NPS	All
Prepare NBWNHP Administrative History.	2011	NPS	All

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**Goal 2:** The park contributes to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of historic resources related to the social, economic, and environmental history of whaling and their associated themes, and fosters the stewardship of these resources through a network of private and public partners.

**Objective 2B:** Develop or improve technology to share current research archives with the public through a network of private and public partners.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Explore software that merges information sources into one searchable meta-data location (i.e. "Digital Museum Project").	2008	NBWM	All
Continue development and expansion of searchable Web-based Index to Whaling Crew Lists.	2010	City	NPS, NBWM

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**Goal 3:** New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park collaborates with a wide range of institutions within the city of New Bedford and beyond to promote the delivery of high-quality, comprehensive, interpretive, cultural, and educational programming to the general public.

**Objective 3A:** Work with partners to develop, provide, deliver, evaluate, and improve curriculum-based educational programs for students, educators, and life-long learners.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Develop and update inventory of curriculum-based education programs.	Ongoing	NPS	All
Complete Partner Education Plan.	2007	NPS	All
Formalize and sustain a Partner Education Committee.	2007	NPS	All
Develop a coordinated relationship with local schools.	2007	NPS	All
Pilot Barrow/New Bedford Education Kit.	2008	NPS	IHC
Offer teacher institute to share curriculum-based educational programs.	2007	NBWM	All
Develop and pilot partnership curriculum-based education program.	2008	NPS	All
Support "Arctic Connections" partnership with Historic Sites Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.	2009	NPS	ERN
Research a comprehensive online reservation system as a planning tool for visitors and program participants.	2011	NPS	All

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**Goal 3:** New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park collaborates with a wide range of institutions within the city of New Bedford and beyond to promote the delivery of high-quality, comprehensive, interpretive, cultural, and educational programming to the general public.

**Objective 3B:** Provide formal and informal interpretive programming to engage people and help them make enduring connections to New Bedford's whaling and maritime history.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Establish Park Public Program Committee.	2007	NPS	All
Examine thematic tours park-wide and formalize a schedule (May to October) of activities.	2008	NPS	All
Develop "Faces of Whaling" Living History Program.	2008-09	NPS	All
Produce Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for Park.	2010	NPS	All

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**Goal 3:** New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park collaborates with a wide range of institutions within the city of New Bedford and beyond to promote the delivery of high-quality, comprehensive, interpretive, cultural, and educational programming to the general public.

**Objective 3C:** Offer and improve use of interpretive media and implement the use of new technologies within the park to interpret the history of the American whaling industry, related themes, and to build awareness of park initiatives.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Expand History and Culture web pages on NPS website.	2007	NPS	All
Develop <i>Behind the Mansions</i> publication.	2007-2008	NPS	NBHS, NBWM, RJD, City
Research feasibility of virtual tour/electronic walking tours, including Podcast tours of NBWNHP.	2008	NPS	All
Evaluate and analyze applicability/feasibility of interactive comprehensive electronic event calendar.	2008	NPS/City	All
Implement webbrangers.	2008	NPS	All
Develop plan for interpretive brochure series based on findings in Ethnographic Study.	2008	NPS	NBWM, NBHS, City
Produce interpretive brochures based on Ethnographic Study: Cape Verdean, Azorean, African American, and Native American.	2011	NPS	NBWM, NBHS, City

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**Goal 4:** At New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park visitors understand the global dimensions of the city's whaling industry and maritime trades (past, present, and future), including their social, economic, and environmental history, the diversity of cultures associated with the industry, and its relationship to arctic exploration and Native Alaskan cultures.

**Objective 4A:** Provide opportunities throughout the park for visitors to understand the commercial practice, social make-up, and environmental history of the city's whaling industry, commercial fishing industry, and maritime trades.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Review results of annual NPS Visitor Survey for comments related to this objective.	Annually	NPS	All
Reach out to existing and new partners (e.g. Azores Cooperative Initiatives Program's Portraits of Two Whaling Ports, Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO), NB Free Public Library, Azorean Maritime Heritage Society, UMASS Dartmouth, Community College, public schools, Wampanoag Tribe, Mystic Seaport) to assist in meeting this objective.	Annually	NPS	NBWM
Identify potential partner that can assist in achieving this objective in the Corson Building.	2007	NPS	All
Assess existing conditions in park (exhibits, interpretive and education programs, publications, websites) against objective and identify gaps.	2008	NPS	All
Host a one-day "gathering" for scholars, educators, and other interested individuals to share new scholarship, resources, and preservation strategies pertaining to Underground Railroad history in southeastern New England.	2009	NPS/NBHS	All
Conduct a wide-range survey (through UMass Centre for Policy Analysis and Centre for Business Research) to better understand and determine visitor awareness and understanding of this goal.	2011	NPS	TBD

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**Goal 4:** At New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park visitors understand the global dimensions of the city's whaling industry and maritime trades (past, present, and future), including their social, economic, and environmental history, the diversity of cultures associated with the industry, and its relationship to arctic exploration and Native Alaskan cultures.

**Objective 4B:** Interpret the diversity of cultures associated with the city's whaling industry and maritime trades and how these cultures continue to exist and influence New Bedford today.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Identify specific partners to jointly offer curriculum-based education programs in the Corson Building.	2007-08	NPS	All
Review results of annual NPS Visitor Survey for comments related to this objective.	Annually	NPS	All
Reach out to existing and new partners (e.g. Azores Cooperative Initiatives Program's Portraits of Two Whaling Ports, Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO), NB Free Public Library, Azorean Maritime Heritage Society, UMASS Dartmouth, Community College, public schools, Wampanoag Tribe, Mystic Seaport) to assist in meeting this objective.	Annually	NPS	NBWM
Assess existing conditions in park (exhibits, interpretive and education programs, publications, websites) against objective and identify gaps.	2008	NPS	All
Develop "Communities of Whaling" exhibit.	2011	NPS	All

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**Goal 4:** At New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park visitors understand the global dimensions of the city's whaling industry and maritime trades (past, present, and future), including their social, economic, and environmental history, the diversity of cultures associated with the industry, and its relationship to arctic exploration and Native Alaskan cultures.

**Objective 4C:** Interpret the relationship of the whaling industry to arctic exploration and Native Alaskan cultures and their direct connection to New Bedford.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Review results of annual NPS Visitor Survey for comments related to this objective.	Annually	NPS	All
Assess existing conditions in park (exhibits, interpretive and education programs, websites, publications) against objective and identify gaps.	2008	NPS	All
Reach out to existing and new partners (e.g. Azores Cooperative Initiatives Program's Portraits of Two Whaling Ports, Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO), NB Free Public Library, Azorean Maritime Heritage Society, UMASS Dartmouth, Community College, public schools, Wampanoag Tribe, Mystic Seaport) to assist in meeting this objective.	Ongoing	NPS	NBWM

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**Goal 5:** Visitor pathways to destinations within the city are safe and easy to navigate. Virtual pathways guide visitors to well-designed and developed destinations on the Internet that is easy to find and use.

**Objective 5A:** Improve walkways and signage to encourage ease of pedestrian movement and safety throughout the park.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Ensure visitor safety by maintaining street lighting, sidewalks, and crosswalks to a high level.	Ongoing	City	NPS
Complete trailblazer sign plan.	2007	NPS	All
Improve connectivity of park with waterfront through Route 18 project (construction).	2009-11	City	NPS, WHALE
Implement trailblazer sign plan.	2008-09	NPS	All

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**Goal 5:** Visitor pathways to destinations within the city are safe and easy to navigate. Virtual pathways guide visitors to well-designed and developed destinations on the Internet that is easy to find and use.

**Objective 5B:** Improve vehicular movement and signage through the park and enhance and increase all parking options.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Complete the Route18 project to improve vehicular movement (construction).	2009-11	City	WHALE, NPS
Install trailblazer signage (driving).	2008	NPS/City	All
Complete re-designation of reserved parking stalls in Elm Street parking garage to upper floors.	2007	City	NPS
Implement Parking and Traffic Circulation Study.	2008-09	City	All
Conduct feasibility study to evaluate shuttle bus service.	2009	NPS/City	All

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**Goal 5:** Visitor pathways to destinations within the city are safe and easy to navigate. Virtual pathways guide visitors to well-designed and developed destinations on the Internet that is easy to find and use.

**Objective 5C:** Improve park technology to provide a more user friendly and cohesive virtual experience for online visitors.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Form website committee to develop a park-wide web plan.	2008	NPS	All
Implement recommendations from web plan.	2009	NPS	All
Research a comprehensive online reservation system as a planning tool for visitors and public program participants.	2011	NPS	All

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**Goal 6:** The park and its partners achieve these goals in a flexible, cost-effective, and responsive manner.

**Objective 6A:** Continue the commitment of accountability and fiscal responsibility for park management activities.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Research joint fundraising and revenue opportunities.	Annually	EC	All
Continue in a joint advisory and evaluation role to review Partner Strategic Action Plan progress.	Annually	EC	All
Establish a mechanism to ensure consistent partner communication across and within partner institutions.	2007	EC	All
Create master calendar for park and partners.	2008	NPS	All
Improve coordination between groups with respect to advertising plan to minimize duplication.	2008	EC	All
Explore opportunities for joint marketing and promotions (websites, advertising, etc.).	2007-08	EC	All
Develop Corson Building / park business plan.	2008	NPS	All
Ensure partnership agreements are in place between NPS and all core partners.	2008	NPS	All
Conduct city branding and tourism study and identify a role for partners to feed into this study/process.	2009	City	All

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**Goal 6:** The park and its partners achieve the strategic plan goals in a flexible, cost-effective, and responsive manner.

**Objective 6B:** Develop and implement protocols for resource sharing that will allow partners to accomplish goals in a flexible, cost-effective, and responsive manner.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Executive committee will meet to share information (programs, education initiatives, etc) and monitor progress on Partner Strategic Action Plan.	Quarterly	NPS	All
Conduct annual planning session for information sharing, joint opportunities, and develop annual work plan.	Annually	NPS	All
Develop, with our partners, a joint strategy for the recruitment, training, and retention of volunteers.	2008	NPS	All
Develop a familiarization tour for new staff and volunteers to orient them to park partners.	2008	NPS	All
Develop a plan for joint training (safety, sexual harassment, disaster planning, etc) and create annual training inventory.	2008	NPS	All

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**Goal 7:** The National Park Service recognizes that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is a source of community identity and pride and that positive, local participation in support of the park will yield success. New Bedford Whaling NHP fosters a climate in which community initiatives and collaborations are encouraged.

**Objective 7A:** Continue to plan, implement, and support community outreach activities that attract new audiences to the park.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Encourage outreach to the broader community through website, online calendar and email correspondence.	Ongoing	NPS	All
Promote and support special events and programs that build awareness and draw new audiences to the park (i.e. Working Waterfront Festival, Summerfest, AHA!).	Annually	NPS	All
Participate in community-based events related to park mission, goals, and themes (i.e. Cape Verdean Recognition Week).	Annually	NPS	All
Develop park local cable access program to promote NBWNHP, its partners, and our shared history.	2007	NPS	All

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**Goal 7:** The National Park Service recognizes that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is a source of community identity and pride and that positive, local participation in support of the park will yield success. New Bedford Whaling NHP fosters a climate in which community initiatives and collaborations are encouraged.

**Objective 7B:** Engage the local community in meaningful dialogue that results in collaborative partnership projects in support of park themes.

Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	
		Lead	Contributor
Create criteria and recruit members for a Park Community Advisory Group.	2007	NPS	All
Host series of public meetings in the community to gather community feedback on park's accomplishments and future initiatives.	2007	NPS	All
Explore possibility of using existing VC conference room as rotating community exhibit space.	2008	NPS	All (including new partners)
Establish Park Community Advisory Group.	2008	NPS	All
Organize and conduct a follow-up meeting to discuss common/general opportunities for volunteerism.	2008	EC	All

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## Appendix A: List of Interviewees

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Joan Beaubian	President	New Bedford Historical Society
Edith Andrews	Tribal Repatriation Officer	Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head
Anne Brengle	President	New Bedford Whaling Museum
Annie McDowell	Executive Director (acting)	Schooner <i>Ernestina</i>
Kate Corkum	Executive Director	Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum
Arthur Motta	Director of Marketing and Tourism	City of New Bedford
Joseph S. Finnerty	President	New Bedford Port Society
Scott W. Lang	Mayor	City of New Bedford
Lisa Sughrue	Executive Director	Waterfront Historic Area League
Celeste Bernardo	Park Superintendent	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Michelle Spink	Administrative Officer	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Derek Santos	Historical Architect	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Jennifer Gonsalves	Park Ranger	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Frank Barrows	Park Ranger	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

## Appendix B: Summary of Interview Findings

The following is a brief summary of the key issues, challenges, and opportunities identified through interviews conducted with park staff and partners.

### What are the most important issues facing the park during the next 5 years?

- Lack of institutional capacity and sustainability, including limited staff resources
- Ability to complete the Corson Building (including funding, construction, programs, resources, etc.)
- Ability to acquire funding and maintaining financial stability
- Lack of public awareness of the park
- Limited and aging volunteers
- Transportation linkages and accessibility (Route 18 project)
- Decreased tourism
- Shifting demographics (age, language, interests)
- Uniqueness of partnership park
- Technical support to local groups

### What actions should the park take to address these issues?

Issues	Actions
Lack of institutional capacity and sustainability, including limited staff resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing staff resources including trained volunteers</li> </ul>
Completion of the Corson Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure Funding</li> <li>• Complete construction activities</li> <li>• Develop programs</li> <li>• Identify required resources (staff, etc.)</li> <li>• Seek additional partners</li> </ul>
Acquiring funding and maintaining financial stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore joint funding opportunities</li> <li>• Securing funding for the park now and in the future (e.g. grants, federal funding, etc.)</li> </ul>
Lack of public awareness of the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build awareness and outreach to the community and general public</li> <li>• Marketing and advertising</li> </ul>
Limited and aging volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment of new volunteers</li> <li>• Research volunteer recruitment initiatives</li> <li>• Provide training for volunteers</li> </ul>
Transportation linkages and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 18 Project</li> <li>• Improve pedestrian walking trails throughout the park</li> <li>• Improve connectivity of park with waterfront</li> </ul>

Issues	Actions
Decreased tourism and sustainability of the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase visitation through marketing and advertising</li> <li>• Interface with the city for a Marketing and Tourism strategy</li> <li>• Improve signage to attract visitors to the park and for visitors to navigate the park</li> <li>• Clarify boundaries of the park</li> <li>• Develop a growth strategy for the park</li> </ul>
Shifting demographics (age, language, interests)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research shifting demographics</li> <li>• Determine what is desired by younger/older populations</li> <li>• Prepare materials in languages that are requested</li> </ul>
Uniqueness of partnership park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize importance of partnership parks</li> <li>• Build more partnerships (e.g. University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Bristol Community College, New Bedford Public Schools)</li> <li>• Supportive partnerships and improved collaboration</li> <li>• Completion and implementation of a strategic plan to establish actions for the partners to move forward together</li> <li>• Improved communication with partners</li> </ul>
Technical support to local partners and groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve technical support for local groups (website, on-line calendar, email correspondence)</li> </ul>

### What do you see as the National Park Service's responsibility?

- Preservation, protection and education, interpretation, and programming
- Rally partners to assist
- Tell the story of the whaling industry, partners, and the park
- 'Homebase/glue' for all the partners
- Acquire and maintain partnerships
- Regular and frequent communication with partners
- Offer their expertise to partners and visitors
- Orientation of and connection with visitors
- Marketing of the park

### How well is the National Park Service and its staff fulfilling its responsibilities?

- Doing well, Great Job
- Tremendous job since the inauguration of the park
- Very enthusiastic



### **What do you perceive as your institution's role in the park?**

*Schooner Ernestina* – Member of the executive committee; currently minimal involvement with the park; could provide interpretive and educational programs to park visitors.

*New Bedford Whaling Museum* – Member of the executive committee; largest museum devoted to American Whaling and the largest partner of the park; houses large collection pertinent to whaling industry; displays exhibits and organizes programs; attracts many of the visitors to the park.

*New Bedford Historical Society* – Member of the executive committee; not part of the park; however supports the park by interpreting the history and legacy of people of color in New Bedford.

*New Bedford Port Society* – Member of the executive committee; oldest member of the park; mission is to preserve Seamen's Bethel and Mariners Home. Seamen's Bethel serves as a memorial to whalemens and fishermen who have lost their lives at sea. The Bethel is open to the public for tourists to visit. The Mariner's Home is not regularly open to the public but has provided a clean, comfortable place to stay for transient seamen who need shelter in the port of New Bedford.

*Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum* – Member of the executive committee and a partner of the park offering permanent and changing exhibits, lecture series, programs, and events. The grounds also encompass a full city block of gardens including a Woodland Garden Walk, a formal boxwood rose parterre garden, a cutting garden, a boxwood specimen garden, and a historic wood lattice pergola open for the public.

*Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE)* – Member of the executive committee; promotes the value and reuse of greater New Bedford's historic buildings through preservation, education, and advocacy; plays a supportive role to the park ensuring historical significance is recognized.

*Wampanoag Tribe* – Member of the executive committee; provides advice and support for historical preservation for the local tribes to the park and partners of the park.

*City of New Bedford* – Member of the executive committee; continuously supports the park by assisting with marketing, advertising, public events and day-to-day maintenance of the park lands including property maintenance, parking and special events.

### **How well is the park fulfilling its responsibilities?**

Partners do very well, however many lack resources (staff, leadership, funding). The partners do as well as they can with what they have.

**Are you aware of any important issues or considerations (opportunities or threats) that the park will face over the next five years?**

- Corson Building
- Funding and financial status of partners and park (e.g. federal funding support unstable)
- Sustainability of organizations
- Partnerships working together, solving problems, establishing new projects, sharing resources
- Separation of park by highway – lack of connection between historic park and waterfront – difficult walk for some.
- Threat of increased vehicular traffic on the highway and through the city creating congestion and parking difficulties throughout the park

**Are there things the National Park Service and its staff could be doing better?**

#### **Partnerships**

- Improve educational programming and curatorial services – limited due to lack of resources
- Build on strengths of the partners such as sharing skilled resources, willing volunteers and available educational programs.
- Improve communication with partners (not just meetings but using technology to stay updated including on-line calendar, interactive website and email correspondence)
- Promote efforts by partners to improve/develop Underground Railroad exhibits
- Recognize the historical importance of Aboriginal People and the park

#### **Community**

- Reach out and work with local communities including Aboriginals, local schools, scouts, and other organizations
- Work with local educational institutions to encourage student visitation and participation
- Seek creative funding by working together with partners researching available options and possible opportunities (e.g. federal, state, municipal, and private)

#### **Operational**

- Increase recruitment and training of human resources (volunteer and staff)
- Increase planned tours for visitors including an Aboriginal interpreter
- Provide administrative assistance to partners
- Improve hours of operation

#### **City Initiatives**

- Improve interface with the city of New Bedford (marketing and tourism)
- Link city master plan with park strategic plan
- Build awareness of the park by increasing advertising, developing a marketing strategy, and fully informing visitors of what park offers. Improve signage within park and to attract tourists from the main routes (i.e. LED message boards)

- Develop safe pedestrian walkways and encourage the flow of traffic through the park, with ample parking options to improve the connectivity of park and partners
- Attract tourists (bring back the cruise ships)
- Re-develop the downtown/waterfront to encourage New Bedford as a tourist destination (including establishment of a hotel/conference center to attract visitors)

**Are there things the partners could be doing better?**

- Set common goals and direction
- Joint projects/working together
- Improve communication
- Build trust with each other to increase ability to collaborate and work together more effectively
- Recognize the changing demographics and its affects on each institution
- More cohesiveness – lobby for the benefit of the park
- Share resources
- Provide more guided tours
- Include historical involvement of Aboriginal people
- Inclusion of New Bedford Free Public Library and New Bedford Art Museum

**What will the park need in order to address pressing issues?**

- More resources including staff with required skills and financial support
- Pursue other resources (i.e. potential of leasing the Corson Building to generate income)
- Recognition of partners' strategic needs (e.g. tutorial, staff, etc)
- Strong advocates in support of the park
- Construction of safe trails and pedestrian walkways throughout park
- Use of an Aboriginal interpreter to tell the story of American Indians

**Are there changes in the structure, operation and communication amongst the partners that might contribute to dealing successfully with the challenges the park could face in the next 5 years?**

- Curatorial and research needs
- Formation of a Community Advisory Group
- Improved communication with partners (e.g. use of email and interactive calendar)
- Establishment and operation of Corson Building

**What external organizations (corporations, community groups, partners, volunteers, etc.) should be involved in the implementation of the strategic plan – who, how, and what? (i.e. are there others who are not at the table who should be?)**

- Educational institutions (e.g. University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and Bristol Community College)
- Art, History and Architecture (AHA)
- Community-based groups (Cape Verdean community, fishing industry, etc.)
- Neighbors within and adjacent to the park
- Commercial enterprises (including local businesses within the park boundaries and the fishing industry)
- Library
- Aboriginal groups and the public (including various ethnic populations)

**Is there anything else important that we should know or consider when completing the strategic plan? Are there any specific documents that you suggest we review?**

- Strong vision and action needed to move the park forward
- Strategic plan will help provide direction that will assist with a focus, direction, and improved service
- The strategic plan must coordinate with the General Management Plan and other existing documents (cooperative agreements)
- Strategic plan cannot conflict with NPS policies
- Linkage between city's master plan and park's strategic action plan
- Recognition and acknowledgement in the strategic plan of the *Underground Railroad Network to Freedom*

## Appendix C: Strategy Session Participant List

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Joan Beaubian	New Bedford Historical Society
Lee Blake	New Bedford Historical Society
Anne Brengle	New Bedford Whaling Museum
Jason Costa	New Bedford Whaling Museum
Lee Heald	New Bedford Whaling Museum
Annie McDowell	Schooner <i>Ernestina</i>
Kate Corkum	Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum
Arthur Motta	City of New Bedford
Joseph Finnerty	New Bedford Port Society
Lisa Sughrue	Waterfront Historic Area League
Celeste Bernardo	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Michelle Spink	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Derek Santos	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Jennifer Gonsalves	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Frank Barrows	New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
Joe Pittari	DPRA, Facilitator
Jim Micak	DPRA, Facilitator

## Appendix D: Two-Day Strategy Session Agenda

### New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

#### Strategic Planning Workshop

September 12-13, 2006

NPS Visitor Center

#### Working Agenda – September 12, 2006 (Day 1)

<b>8:30 – 8:45</b>	<b>Workshop Start Up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions and opening remarks by the Park Superintendent</li><li>• Review the purpose of the workshop</li><li>• Review the expected outcomes</li><li>• Review the working agenda for the workshop</li></ul>	<b>C. Bernardo</b> <b>J. Pittari, DPRA</b>
<b>8:45 – 9:30</b>	<b>Background, Context and Key Drivers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the existing mandate, mission, and goals for the park</li><li>• Review and confirm outcomes of interviews and previous SWOT work completed by participants (i.e. what are the issues and opportunities)</li><li>• Highlight significant observations, data and trends that could inform the future direction of the park</li><li>• Group Discussion</li></ul>	<b>J. Pittari, DPRA</b> <b>C. Bernardo</b>
<b>9:30 – 10:00</b>	<b>Introduction to Strategic Planning and Visioning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slide presentation on the overview, components, and processes/outcomes for strategic planning</li><li>• Review key terms and definitions</li><li>• Provide examples from other jurisdictions</li><li>• Questions &amp; discussion</li></ul>	<b>J. Micak, DPRA</b>
<b>10:00 – 10:15</b>	<b>Coffee</b>	
<b>10:15 – 11:15</b>	<b>Visioning Exercise</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depending on participant preference, the visioning exercise will be done in plenary or in two smaller groups. If smaller groups are preferred, each will report back their results in plenary</li><li>• Participants will be asked to react to and consider the outcomes of the interviews and SWOT - the priorities and issues facing the park</li><li>• Upon reflection participants will then collectively develop a draft vision (or components of a draft vision)</li></ul>	<b>All</b>

<b>11:15 – 12:00</b>	<b>Developing the Park's Action Plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group discussion on the actions required for each of the listed issues/opportunities noted in the review of the operating context</li><li>• Group discussion to address activities required, timing of activities, who will be responsible for completing activities, resource requirements for the park and its partners</li></ul> <p>Note: depending on the number of actions identified, we may want to break the session into 2 groups – each taking half of the items...then reporting back in plenary</p>	<b>All</b>
<b>12:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Lunch (to be provided)</b>	
<b>12:30 – 2:30</b>	<b>Developing the Park's Action Plans continued</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>2:30 – 2:45</b>	<b>Coffee</b>	
<b>2:30 – 4:00</b>	<b>Developing the Park's Action Plans continued</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>4:00 - 4:30</b>	<b>Review and Wrap up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review outcomes from Day 1</li><li>• Review expectation and agenda for Day 2</li><li>• Wrap up</li></ul>	<b>C. Bernardo</b> <b>J. Pittari, DPRA</b>

## **New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park**

### **Strategic Planning Workshop September 12-13, 2006 NPS Visitor Center**

#### **Working Agenda – September 13, 2006 (Day 2)**

<b>8:30 – 8:45</b>	<b>Introduction to Day 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key points from the discussion and initial results of Day 1 outcomes</li><li>• Review the working agenda for Day 2</li><li>• Questions &amp; discussion</li></ul>	<b>J. Pittari, DPRA</b>
<b>8:45– 10:15</b>	<b>Developing the Park's Action Plans continued</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuation of group discussion for action steps identified on Day 1</li></ul>	<b>All</b>
<b>10:15 – 10:30</b>	<b>Coffee</b>	
<b>10:30 – 11:30</b>	<b>Implementation Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group discussion on strategies for implementing and monitoring the completion of the actions from the strategic plan</li></ul>	<b>J. Pittari, DPRA</b>
<b>11:30 – 12:00</b>	<b>Workshop Wrap-up and Next Steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review outcomes from Day 2</li><li>• Group discussion and confirmation of next steps</li><li>• Wrap up</li></ul>	<b>C. Bernardo J. Pittari, DPRA</b>



## Appendix E: List of Reference Materials

### Reports and Documents

Enabling Legislation P.L. 104-333: Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 Sec 511  
New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Partner Education Plan (DRAFT September 2006)

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Strategic Plan FY2001-FY2005, Revised Edition

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Annual Performance Plan Fiscal Year 2004  
(October 1, 2003 – September 30, 2004)

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Charting the Future: A Management Plan for New  
Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

City of New Bedford and Town of Fairhaven, Harbor Master Plan Committee New Bedford/Fairhaven  
Harbor Plan (August 2002)

City of New Bedford Office of Tourism and Marketing, City of New Bedford Tourism Summit Report  
May 5, 2006

Annual Narrative, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, New Bedford Whaling National  
Historical Park, 2005

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park Executive Committee - Operating Guidelines

National Park Service, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park operating documents including  
organizational charts, job descriptions, and listing of staff duties

SWOT Analysis, New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park Executive Committee, 2005

### Websites:

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park <http://www.nps.gov/nebe>

National Park Service Department of the Interior <http://www.nps.gov>

City of New Bedford <http://www.ci.new-bedford.ma.us>

New Bedford Whaling Museum <http://www.whalingmuseum.org>

Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum <http://www.rjdmuseum.org>

New Bedford Historical Society <http://www.newbedfordhistory.org/>

Seamen's Bethel <http://www.newbedfordseamensbethel.org>

Schooner *Ernestina* <http://www.ernestina.org>

WHALE (Waterfront Historic Area League) <http://www.waterfrontleague.org/>